

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

John I. Lebeaux, Chairman (2004)
Thomas A. Fiore, Vice-Chairman (2004)
Bruce R. Card, Clerk (2002)
Maurice M. DePalo (2002)
Philip S. Hammond (2003)

MEETINGS

The Board of Selectmen meets in open session on Monday evenings at 7:00 PM in the Selectmen's Meeting Room in the Richard D. Carney Municipal Office Building. Meetings are generally held on alternate Mondays. At these meetings the Board conducts the general business of the Town of Shrewsbury pursuant to the Town Charter and the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The meeting schedule is available by visiting or contacting the Selectmen's Office (508-841-8504) or by accessing the Town's Internet Web Site (www.ci.shrewsbury.ma.us). The regular meetings are broadcast live on Shrewsbury Public Access Channel 35 and are replayed at other times for public convenience.

The Board also holds special meetings and workshops. In January it held its Annual Legislative Meeting with Congressman James P. McGovern, State Senator Guy W. Glodis and State Representative Karyn E. Polito. This meeting allows the Board and other Town officials to discuss with the Town's legislators how various federal and state policies and programs affect the Town of Shrewsbury. This meeting continues to be an excellent forum for the exchange of ideas, and a wonderful opportunity to convey local concerns to our legislators.

The Board also conducted workshop sessions at which it reviewed particular issues with the Town Manager and appropriate Department Heads. In 2001 the Board held workshop sessions on Public Works Priorities and Financial Issues.

The Board continues to tape a cable access television program, *Selectmen's Roundtable*, on a regular basis. The program's purpose is to allow the Board to present to the public issues concerning the Town in a more informal manner than at the regular meetings. This program is seen at various times on Shrewsbury Public Access Channel 35. New programs air every two weeks.

BOARD MEMBERS

At the Annual Town Election on May 7, 2001 Thomas A. Fiore and John I. Lebeaux were each re-elected to the Board of Selectmen for a three-year term. At its first meeting after the election the Board organized as follows: John I. Lebeaux, Chairman; Thomas A. Fiore, Vice-Chairman; Bruce R. Card, Clerk.

TOWN MANAGER

The Board conducted its Annual Evaluation of the Town Manager in February. Town Manager Daniel J. Morgado's overall performance was judged to be excellent to distinguished.

Mr. Morgado exceeded the Board's expectations for overall management. His performance as chief financial officer of the Town remained sound even as demands for services increased at a much higher rate than revenue growth. The Board found Mr. Morgado to be highly self-motivated and one who encourages an energetic, team approach throughout the organization.

The Board concluded that Mr. Morgado is very mindful of the Town Charter. He vigorously conducts all the various duties and responsibilities of his office. He is also well aware of the duties and responsibilities that fall outside his jurisdiction. He is most willing to provide support to the Board and other commissions, committees, and boards for their respective responsibilities as outlined by the Charter or by Massachusetts General Law.

As a manager of personnel, the Board concluded that Mr. Morgado sets clear goals and objectives. He expects a great deal from the various departments, but allows them to do much of their work in the manner they see as best.

The Board recognized Mr. Morgado's high standing among his peers. His participation in the activities of the Massachusetts Municipal Association, as a member of the Joint Labor-Management Committee for Municipal Police and Fire, and as a graduate level instructor are all areas where he learns from others as he shares his own experiences.

Mr. Morgado's successful discharge of his duties as Shrewsbury Town Manager is greatly aided by the efforts of Assistant Town Manager Michael R. Hale. The Town of Shrewsbury is most fortunate to have in its employ not one, but two accomplished, energetic, and effective municipal managers. Mr. Hale's work on behalf of the Town provides additional positive value and dimension to the Town Manager's Office.

ACTIVITIES AND ISSUES

As the executive body of the Town, the Board of Selectmen oversees the policies of our municipal government. It conducts hearings as the Local Licensing Authority, acts as Appointing Authority, acts as both Road and Water Commissioners, and proposes legislation to the Town Meeting throughout the year. Items of particular note for the year 2001 are listed below.

Community Preservation Act Consideration

The Board held Public Hearings in January and February to receive public input on whether or not to bring the Community Preservation Act (CPA) to the Town Meeting as the first step in the adoption process. Approval by a majority of the voters would also be necessary to adopt the CPA.

The CPA would allow a municipality to place a surcharge of up to 3% on real estate tax bills. The funds raised by means of the surcharge must be used for three specific purposes: open space purchasing, historic preservation, and creation of affordable housing. Additional funding from the Commonwealth may also be made to communities that adopt the CPA. The Act sets out several very specific regulations on the process that a community must follow upon adoption.

The Board heard considerable testimony largely in opposition to the Town's adoption of the CPA. The Board determined that the decision by the Town Meeting and the voters in 1997 to approve a \$5 million Proposition 2-1/2 debt exclusion to fund open space purchasing was a more preferable method to fund such purchases. The Board concluded that it did not wish to embrace what it felt was the circumvention of Proposition 2-1/2 and the authority of the Town Meeting to appropriate tax dollars by adopting the CPA. It voted not to place the question on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant.

Wheelabrator Coal Ash Proposal

In March the Board heard a proposal regarding the possibility of the Town allowing the disposal of coal ash at the municipal landfill facility by the operator of the site, Wheelabrator Millbury. The facility's current prime function is to serve as the landfill for Wheelabrator's waste-to-energy incinerator in Millbury, the facility to which Shrewsbury's trash is taken. The Town has long benefited from its relationship with Wheelabrator Millbury. The Wheelabrator Millbury ash revenue, and at a much higher rate, revenue from ash from other waste-to-energy incinerators has helped to maintain the high level of municipal services provided at a comparatively mid-range average residential tax bill.

The Board placed an appropriate article on the May Special Town Meeting Warrant, at which time the proposal was approved allowing the Town Manager with approval of the Board to enter into a contract. After receiving positive reports from appropriate engineers regarding environmental concerns, a contract was signed by both parties. As this report is written the Town is receiving coal ash at the facility.

School Building Projects

The construction of the new High School on Sewall Hill proceeds. At the time of this writing finishes are being applied to much of the building. The Board of Selectmen recognizes the hours and hours of effort expended by the High School/Middle School Building Committee in its effort to deliver a building that will make the community proud for many years. The huge scale of such a project, the largest public building project in the Town's history, increases the associated challenges that need to be met along the way. Though sometimes these individual challenges often overshadow the public's appreciation and awareness of the very substantial progress made to date, over time only the tremendous value of this building to Shrewsbury will endure.

As previously reported, during the fall of 2000 it was discovered that there was substantially more ledge on the property than the amount that was projected and for which funds were budgeted. Unexpected ledge costs were identified by the Committee to

be \$4.6 million. The Committee was able to apply \$1.2 million from within the existing budget to offset these costs, and asked the Board to place an article on the May Special Town Meeting Warrant seeking an additional \$3.4 million appropriation. The Town Meeting overwhelmingly approved this request. The Board will consult with the Massachusetts Department of Revenue during 2002 to determine if this additional appropriation may be included within the previously approved debt exclusion. If not, another funding source will need to be identified.

Other challenges remain. The Committee has denied claims by the Contractor concerning two other site issues. The Contractor has the right to pursue this claim in the future. As this report is written all effort is being made to have the project in condition to accept students for the opening of the school year at the end of August.

The Committee has decided to slow down the schedule of the existing High School to Middle School project. It became apparent to the Committee that the asbestos abatement portion of the project, originally projected to be handled in a matter of weeks, would more realistically take several months. The Committee decided that its previously aggressive timetable that anticipated this project ready for occupancy in late August 2003 could not be met. Current thinking is that the building will be occupied in late August 2004.

Water Issues

In April the Board received a comprehensive study of the water supply and distribution system from its consulting engineers, the last one being done in 1990. The study shows there is strain on the system and it makes many recommendations to improve distribution and suggests seeking additional supply. The Town has made and will continue to make improvements to the system and it will seek new sources, but these projects must be phased in over a period of years due to the very large costs involved.

The Board urges all residents to consider how they use water and to insure they are using it in the most efficient manner. In financial terms the least costly practice is conservation. Any improvements to the system will need to be paid by water rates. The Board may need to examine the rate structure in the near future to fund the improvements required by the increasing demand.

Most of the strain identified in the study is the result of irrigation and other outdoor uses during the spring and summer months. The Board found it necessary to declare mandatory water conservation measures in April and more severe restrictions in August. Such measures are becoming more and more common throughout the region. The Board notes that most residents respected the restrictions for the good of the community.

It is the Board's intent to maintain local control over this issue. At the time of this writing the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency has issued a statewide Drought Advisory. The Advisory calls upon every municipality to enact water use restriction by-laws to prepare for the upcoming spring and summer. The Town already has such a by-law in effect. It must be made clear that if our local conservation methods fail to reduce usage, state regulatory bodies have the authority to supersede local

government. Water conservation must become part of the daily routine of Shrewsbury's residents and businesses.

Wastewater Management Issues

The Town's participation as a member of the Assabet River Consortium continues. In June the Board heard a presentation of the Phase One Needs Analysis of the Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan. As the Town awaits the next Phase, the Board continues to watch this matter with great concern. The Board is concerned that large increases in sewer rates will be necessary to implement mandated improvements to the system. The results of the completed Plan may also act to place restrictions on growth and development in the community. Such restrictions imposed because of changes in wastewater regulations would lessen the local control to which citizens are accustomed.

Federal Census Leads To New Precinct

The 2000 Federal Census reported the Town's population at 31,640. Massachusetts General Law required that the Town establish one new precinct due to the newly determined population. Town Clerk Ann M. Dagle and her office created a new precinct plan that the Board approved in June. The Board and the Town Clerk both recognize the technical assistance of Dan McCullen of the Engineering Department to this process.

Precinct Nine was created in the southeast corner of the Town. Every other precinct except Precinct Two had its layouts changed to form precincts with the appropriate population.

Precinct Nine will use the Knights of Columbus Hall on South Street as its polling place beginning in 2002. The Board also designated SAC Park on Lake Street as the polling place for Precinct Four. Moving Precinct Four away from the Coolidge School should relieve much of the pressure from the Coolidge site. Precinct Three will remain using Coolidge as its polling place.

The Board wishes to express its gratitude to both the Knights of Columbus and SAC Park for offering the use of their respective facilities as polling places at no charge to the Town. The Frohsinn Club on North Quinsigamond Avenue has the Board's gratitude as well, for offering its facility at no charge as the polling place for Precinct Two for many years.

Master Plan Implementation

Upon the May Annual Town Meeting's acceptance of the Master Plan, an Implementation Group began readying Plan recommendations for consideration. Six articles were presented by the Group to the Planning Board which requested that the Board place them on the November Special Town Meeting Warrant. Five of the six were approved by the Town Meeting. The Implementation Group will continue its work to put the planning document into practice.

CLOSING

The year 2001 was a successful one for the Town of Shrewsbury. The employees of the Town, the Department Heads, supervisors, and line personnel continue to efficiently deliver a very high level of services to the community. The volunteer efforts of the various boards, committees, and commissions maintain the will of the townspeople. Everyone should be grateful for all these individuals' willingness to offer their time and service to improve the community. Please refer to their individual reports for detailed information about their activities.

The Board would be remiss if it did not take note of the numerous donations and gifts made to the Town by many of its residents and local businesses. These gifts and donations add to the quality of life of every member of this community. The Board wishes to extend its sincere gratitude on behalf of the Town to each and every resident and business that were willing to do something extra to make Shrewsbury a better place to live and work.

The Board depends on the staff of the combined Offices of the Board of Selectmen and the Town Manager so that it may properly discharge its duties and responsibilities. Along with Mr. Morgado and Mr. Hale, Janice McCoy, secretary to the Board of Selectmen and Paula Brady, secretary to the Town Manager continue to provide the highest level of support.

Respectfully Submitted,
Board of Selectmen